

NEVADA Connections

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How will you celebrate NFL Day?

No ... it's not all about football, but about families! Join family literacy programs around the country as they celebrate National Family Literacy Day on November 1st.

The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) recently compiled a list of ways programs have celebrated in the past. Some examples:

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- 📖 St. Louis, Missouri: Parents and children visited the local library. Afterwards they attended a luncheon where parents discussed the books they checked out with their children. Family literacy programs prepared "family packs" that included books and other materials for the home.
 - 📖 Los Angeles, California: One family center encouraged everyone to buy a book, read it to a child, and then give the book to the child. When word of this initiative got around, a generous donor supplied a box of new books and new family libraries were launched in 30 homes.
 - 📖 Greenville, South Carolina: The Family Learning Program celebrated from October 1st to November 1st by participating in a number of activities focused on increasing parent-child interactions through children's literature. The month-long celebration ended with parents and children participating in a Family Literacy Day parade dressed as their favorite characters from the books they were reading.
 - 📖 Washington, D.C.: The D.C. Public Schools Even Start Family Literacy Program held a "Passport to Literacy" event at the Capital Children's Museum for more than 300 parents and children. Volunteers from eight countries read stories about their cultures at different reading stations. Children received a stamp of each country on their "passports" to show where they'd been.
 - 📖 Berlin, Wisconsin: One Even Start program partnered with a local nursing home. Residents shared stories about their childhood with the visiting families, and all enjoyed refreshments, songs, stories, and even a juggling/magic act as they celebrated intergenerational learners from infants to 100 years old.
 - 📖 Smyrna, Delaware: A new feature to the annual fair-like celebration was the addition of a Parent Help Desk, designed to assist parents as they help their children prepare for the state test by providing resources, ideas, and learning activity packets. For a daily calendar of ideas, visit the NCFL Web site at www.familit.org. Do a search on "NFLD", which will lead you to a downloadable PDF document.

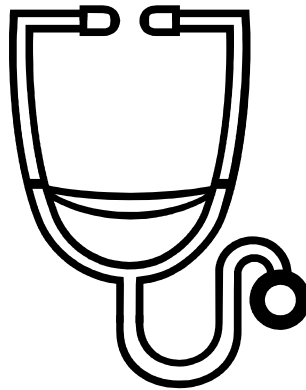
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Research shows health literacy related to education, affects quality of care

Source: NCSALL Occasional Paper "Building a Level Playing Field," Comings, Reder, and Sum, 12/2001, pp. 14-15.

A review of the research literature on the relationship between basic skills and health (conducted by Rima Rudd of Harvard's School of Public Health) points out that educational attainment is a strong predictor of good health (Rudd, 1999). The research reviewed suggests that this relationship exists because education increases income, supports healthy lifestyles, increases problem-solving abilities, and changes values in ways that support good health. More directly, literacy influences access to crucial



information about health and specific treatments. The research also points out that literacy plays an

important role in the management of chronic diseases, such as asthma and diabetes, that require a complicated regimen of medication, diet, and exercise for good management. Finally, the research notes that high levels of literacy skills are needed to navigate the increasingly complex health care system, which requires active patient management of individuals' health care. Health care is becoming more complicated, but it is also becoming more effective. High levels of basic skills help people take advantage of the advances that medicine is making.

CA survey details immigrants' challenges

A June 2003 poll funded by the California Endowment Foundation found a direct correlation between a person's ability to speak English and the quality of health care he or she receives.

Researchers interviewed 1,200 California residents in 11 languages and dialects, including Armenian, Cantonese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Some findings:

- Overall, more than a third of Hispanics, Chinese, Koreans, Hmong, and Vietnamese have problems grasping a medical situation when they do not hear it described in their own language. The rate among Cambodian immigrants is 75 percent.
- More than 50 percent of Iranians, Hmong, and Hispanics are confused by instructions after being discharged from a hospital.
- One-third of all immigrants report confusion about how to use their prescription medicines.
- Many immigrants also have trouble understanding the labels on their prescription medicines. More than a quarter of these immigrants with a poor understanding of English have gotten sick as a result of this barrier.
- A majority of Hispanic and Korean immigrants do not understand the proper use of antibiotics. Immigrants that have limited English skills are considerably more likely to be confused about antibiotics.
- Foreign language media is a prime source of medical information for California immigrants. Hispanics and Chinese utilize it the most. Television is the most popular medium followed by newspapers, the Internet, and the radio. Immigrants tend to overwhelmingly prefer the use of ethnic media as opposed to English language media as a source of medical information.

HEALTH TOOLKIT AVAILABLE

Although it contains some information specific to Virginia (e.g., agencies to help the uninsured and underinsured), the Virginia Adult Education Health Literacy Toolkit contains a wealth of "generic" information, such as:

- definition and background of health literacy
- importance of health literacy to the ABE population
- curricula and teaching approaches
- teaching activities and resources for ABE and ESL instruction.

For more information, visit

www.aelweb.vcu.edu/publications/healhlit/

Editor's note: We continue our series spotlighting the unsung heroes who work behind the scenes but are so key to the success of Nevada's literacy efforts. When we asked ABE/ESL program directors to suggest people for the series, Meachell LaSalle, referring to her selection, suggested we call the series, "They Save our Butts!"

Irma Reyes: a synergistic approach to success

Irma Reyes is a great example of multi-cultural synergy. Her family moved to Elko from Guadalajara when she was six, joining a host of aunts, uncles, and cousins. Irma spoke "English only" in school while continuing Hispanic traditions at home.

"My work has always involved non-profits or governmental agencies where language was a barrier and where outreach to the Hispanic community was important," she said. She's held positions in the District Attorney's Child Support Office, at the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Housing Office, and at the state's Employment Office. Two years ago, she landed at Great Basin College, where she serves as Administrative Assistant to Meachell Lasalle, Coordinator of the ABE/ESL program.



She and Meachell work synergistically, also. "I get a lot of ideas and can visualize the results," said Irma, "and Meachell walks me through the details, showing me the steps needed to get the job done."

And the jobs do get done! In addition to her "normal" duties as Meachell's assistant, Irma has developed a Hispanic Advisory Board for the College and instituted a process for local Hispanic leaders to meet

For a copy of GBC's ABE newsletters, contact Irma at ipreyes@gbcnv.edu, 775/753-2126.

monthly with President Dr. Paul Kilpatrick. She produces a student newsletter biannually and a teacher/tutor newsletter four times during the school year, again facilitating input from the Hispanic Advisory Board and from instructional staff. In 2002 she chaired the Great Basin (multi-cultural) Festival and currently serves as Hispanic Consultant for the annual event.

A single Mom (Eliseth is five years old), Irma enjoys traveling with her daughter, family, and friends to Reno and Salt Lake City. Her favorite trips, though, are to the rural area outside of Guadalajara. "Those mountains and waterfalls, that rocky landscape and fruit trees — it's a whole different world!" she reminisced. Her trips have been curtailed a bit lately, as Irma is enrolled in the social science program at Great Basin, with an ultimate goal of becoming a marriage and family therapist.

Irma said that what she most likes about her work is "the contact with others, to hear their stories and see them succeed." To talk with Irma is to feel the same thing about her!

For math help, count on ANN

The Adult Numeracy Network is "a community dedicated to quality mathematics instruction at the adult level." This volunteer professional organization is comprised of teachers, curriculum developers, researchers, and others interested in mathematics literacy for adults. Many work in GED, high school equivalency, ABE, ESOL, workplace literacy, family literacy, or



developmental mathematics programs. They communicate via the *Math Practitioner* quarterly newsletter and through an electronic listserv. To subscribe to the numeracy listserv, send a message to: majordomo@world.std.com. In the message area, type: subscribe numeracy.

The group's Web site is at www.std.com/anpn.

The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires. —William Ward

Connecting resources for Nevada's adult workforce

Adult civic education: It's not just about voting

As highly educated citizens face challenges in assessing government security warnings and other information, adult civics education becomes even more important. Susan Imel's extremely timely *Adult Civic Education*, a Practice Application Brief published by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, examines the role of adult civic education in contemporary society and provides recommendations for its practice. Imel cites research that advocates:



Viewing civic education as a way to build the capacity of individuals to become and stay informed, express ideas and opinions, work together on goals, and develop or adapt attitudes and values. (However, instructors should not encourage specific views or opinions.)



Using approaches that focus on construction versus instruction so that students have a chance to struggle with issues and learn how rights and responsibilities can translate into action.



Using methods that encourage critical thinking, discussion, listening, and reflection.



Creating a context within the learning environment that models the kind of society that

learners are working to achieve.



Connecting with issues in which learners have a personal interest or stake.

Download the entire *Brief* from
www.ericacve.org/pab.asp.

CASAS Quarterly moves online

The summer issue of the *CASAS Quarterly Report* newsletter is now available online — and only online! There will not be a print version of the summer edition. According to a recent communiqué from the organization, “CASAS plans to transition from a print-only version of its newsletter to an online-only newsletter in the future. This move will allow more people the ability to access all articles, the ability to share information with staff more easily, and the ability to print articles of interest.”

To access the *Quarterly Reports*, visit the CASAS Web site (www.casas.org), click on “Downloads” (at the top), then on “CASAS Quarterlies” along the left.